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(g) The appeal will be decided by the DADA/GC&MED, within 5 working days of its receipt, if practicable.

(h) The appeal decision will be based only on the information and documentation in the protest record as supplemented by the appeal. SBA will provide a copy of the decision to the contracting officer, the protestor, and the protested concern, consistent with law.

(i) The decision of the DADA/GC&MED, is the final decision of the SBA, and cannot be further appealed to OHA.

PART 125—GOVERNMENT CONTRACTING PROGRAMS

Sec.

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AUTHORITY: 15 U.S.C. 634(b)(6), 637 and 644; 31 U.S.C. 9701, 9702.

SOURCE: 61 FR 3312, Jan. 31, 1996, unless otherwise noted.

§ 125.1 Programs included.

The regulations in this part relate to the Government contracting assistance programs of SBA. There are four main programs: Prime contracting assistance; Subcontracting assistance; Government property sales assistance; and the Certificate of Competency program. The objective of the programs is to assist small businesses in obtaining a fair share of Federal Government contracts, subcontracts, and property sales.

§ 125.2 Prime contracting assistance.

(a) *General.* Small business concerns must receive any award or contract, or any contract for the sale of Government property, that SBA and the procuring or disposal agency determine to be in the interest of:

(1) Maintaining or mobilizing the Nation's full productive capacity;

(2) War or national defense programs;

(3) Assuring that a fair proportion of the total purchases and contracts for property, services and construction for the Government in each industry category are placed with small business concerns; or

(4) Assuring that a fair proportion of the total sales of Government property is made to small business concerns.

(b) *PCR and procuring activity responsibilities.* (1) SBA Procurement Center Representatives (PCRs) are generally located at Federal agencies and buying activities which have major contracting programs. PCRs review all acquisitions not set-aside for small businesses to determine whether a set-aside is appropriate.

(2) A procuring activity must provide a copy of a proposed acquisition strategy (e.g., Department of Defense Form 2579, or equivalent) to the applicable PCR (or to the SBA Office of Government Contracting Area Office serving the area in which the buying activity is located if a PCR is not assigned to the procuring activity) at least 30 days prior to a solicitation's issuance whenever a proposed acquisition strategy:

(i) Includes in its description goods or services currently being performed by a small business and the magnitude of the quantity or estimated dollar value of the proposed procurement would render small business prime contract participation unlikely;

(ii) Seeks to package or consolidate discrete construction projects; or

(iii) Meets the definition of a bundled requirement as defined in paragraph (d)(1)(i) of this section.

(3) Whenever any of the circumstances identified in paragraph (b)(2) of this section exist, the procuring activity must also submit to the applicable PCR (or to the SBA Office of Government Contracting Area Office serving the area in which the buying activity is located if a PCR is not assigned to the procuring activity) a written statement explaining why:

(i) If the proposed acquisition strategy involves a bundled requirement, the procuring activity believes that the bundled requirement is necessary and justified under the analysis required by paragraph (d)(3)(iii) of this section; or

(ii) If the description of the requirement includes goods or services currently being performed by a small business and the magnitude of the quantity or estimated dollar value of the proposed procurement would render small business prime contract participation unlikely, or if a proposed procurement for construction seeks to package or consolidate discrete construction projects:

(A) The proposed acquisition cannot be divided into reasonably small lots to permit offers on quantities less than the total requirement;

(B) Delivery schedules cannot be established on a basis that will encourage small business participation;

(C) The proposed acquisition cannot be offered so as to make small business participation likely; or

(D) Construction cannot be procured as separate discrete projects.

(4) In conjunction with their duties to promote the set-aside of procurements for small business, PCRs will identify small businesses that are capable of performing particular requirements, including teams of small business concerns for larger or bundled requirements (see § 121.103(f)(3) of this chapter).

(5)(i) If a PCR believes that a proposed procurement will render small business prime contract participation unlikely, or if a PCR does not believe a bundled requirement to be necessary and justified, the PCR shall recommend to the procurement activity alternative procurement methods which would increase small business prime contract participation. Such alternatives may include:

(A) Breaking up the procurement into smaller discrete procurements;

(B) Breaking out one or more discrete components, for which a small business set-aside may be appropriate; and

(C) Reserving one or more awards for small companies when issuing multiple awards under task order contracts.

(ii) Where bundling is necessary and justified, the PCR will work with the procuring activity to tailor a strategy that preserves small business prime contract participation to the maximum extent practicable.

(iii) The PCR will also work to ensure that small business participation is maximized through subcontracting opportunities. This may include:

(A) Recommending that the solicitation and resultant contract specifically state the small business subcontracting goals which are expected of the contractor awardee; and

(B) Recommending that the small business subcontracting goals be based on total contract dollars instead of subcontract dollars.

(6) In cases where there is disagreement between a PCR and the contracting officer over the suitability of a particular acquisition for a small business set-aside, whether or not the acquisition is a bundled or substantially bundled requirement within the meaning of paragraph (d) of this section, the PCR may initiate an appeal to the head of the contracting activity. If the head of the contracting activity agrees with the contracting officer, SBA may appeal the matter to the secretary of the department or head of the agency. The time limits for such appeals are set forth in 19.505 of the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) (48 CFR 19.505).

(7) PCRs will work with a procuring activity's Small Business Specialist (SBS) to identify proposed solicitations that involve bundling, and with the agency acquisition officials to revise the acquisition strategies for such proposed solicitations, where appropriate, to increase the probability of participation by small businesses, including small business contract teams, as prime contractors. If small business participation as prime contractors appears unlikely, the SBS and PCR will facilitate small business participation as subcontractors or suppliers.

(c) *BPCR responsibilities.* (1) SBA is required by section 403 of Public Law 98–577 (15 U.S.C. 644(l)) to assign a break-out PCR (BPCR) to major contracting centers. A major contracting center is a center that, as determined by SBA, purchases substantial dollar amounts of other than commercial items, and which has the potential to achieve significant savings as a result of the assignment of a BPCR.

(2) BPCRs advocate full and open competition in the Federal contracting

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process and recommend the breakout for competition of items and requirements which previously have not been competed. They may appeal the failure by the buying activity to act favorably on a recommendation in accord with the appeal procedures set forth in § 19.505 of the FAR (48 CFR 19.505). BPCRs also review restrictions and obstacles to competition and make recommendations for improvement. Other authorized functions of a BPCR are set forth in 48 CFR 19.403(c) of the FAR and Section 15(l) of the Act (15 U.S.C. 644(l)).

(d) *Contract bundling*—(1) *Definitions*—

(i) *Bundled requirement or bundling*. The term *bundled requirement or bundling* refers to the consolidation of two or more procurement requirements for goods or services previously provided or performed under separate smaller contracts into a solicitation of offers for a single contract that is likely to be unsuitable for award to a small business concern due to:

(A) The diversity, size, or specialized nature of the elements of the performance specified;

(B) The aggregate dollar value of the anticipated award;

(C) The geographical dispersion of the contract performance sites; or

(D) Any combination of the factors described in paragraphs (d)(1)(i) (A), (B), and (C) of this section.

(ii) *Separate smaller contract*. A separate smaller contract is a contract that has previously been performed by one or more small business concerns or was suitable for award to one or more small business concerns.

(iii) *Substantial bundling*. Substantial bundling is any contract consolidation, which results in an award whose average annual value is \$10 million or more.

(2) *Requirement to foster small business participation*. The Small Business Act requires each Federal agency to foster the participation of small business concerns as prime contractors, subcontractors, and suppliers in the contracting opportunities of the Government. To comply with this requirement, agency acquisition planners must:

(i) Structure procurement requirements to facilitate competition by and among small business concerns, includ-

ing small disadvantaged, 8(a) and women-owned business concerns; and

(ii) Avoid unnecessary and unjustified bundling of contract requirements that inhibits or precludes small business participation in procurements as prime contractors.

(3) *Requirement for market research*. In addition to the requirements of paragraph (b)(2) of this section and before proceeding with an acquisition strategy that could lead to a contract containing bundled or substantially bundled requirements, an agency must conduct market research to determine whether bundling of the requirements is necessary and justified. During the market research phase, the acquisition team should consult with the applicable PCR (or if a PCR is not assigned to the procuring activity, the SBA Office of Government Contracting Area Office serving the area in which the buying activity is located).

(4) *Requirement to notify current small business contractors of intent to bundle*. The procuring activity must notify each small business which is performing a contract that it intends to bundle that requirement with one or more other requirements at least 30 days prior to the issuance of the solicitation for the bundled or substantially bundled requirement. The procuring activity, at that time, should also provide to the small business the name, phone number and address of the applicable SBA PCR (or if a PCR is not assigned to the procuring activity, the SBA Office of Government Contracting Area Office serving the area in which the buying activity is located).

(5) *Determining requirements to be necessary and justified*. When the procuring activity intends to proceed with an acquisition involving bundled or substantially bundled procurement requirements, it must document the acquisition strategy to include a determination that the bundling is necessary and justified, when compared to the benefits that could be derived from meeting the agency's requirements through separate smaller contracts.

(i) The procuring activity may determine a consolidated requirement to be necessary and justified if, as compared to the benefits that it would derive

from contracting to meet those requirements if not consolidated, it would derive measurably substantial benefits. The procuring activity must quantify the identified benefits and explain how their impact would be measurably substantial. The benefits may include cost savings and/or price reduction, quality improvements that will save time or improve or enhance performance or efficiency, reduction in acquisition cycle times, better terms and conditions, and any other benefits that individually, in combination, or in the aggregate would lead to:

(A) Benefits equivalent to 10 percent of the contract value (including options) where the contract value is \$75 million or less; or

(B) Benefits equivalent to 5 percent of the contract value (including options) or \$7.5 million, whichever is greater, where the contract value exceeds \$75 million.

(ii) Notwithstanding paragraph (d)(5)(i) of this section, the Assistant Secretaries with responsibility for acquisition matters (Service Acquisition Executives) or the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition and Technology (for other Defense Agencies) in the Department of Defense and the Deputy Secretary or equivalent in civilian agencies may, on a non-delegable basis determine that a consolidated requirement is necessary and justified when:

(A) There are benefits that do not meet the thresholds set forth in paragraph (d)(5)(i) of this section but, in the aggregate, are critical to the agency's mission success; and

(B) Procurement strategy provides for maximum practicable participation by small business.

(iii) The reduction of administrative or personnel costs alone shall not be a justification for bundling of contract requirements unless the administrative or personnel cost savings are expected to be substantial, in relation to the dollar value of the procurement to be consolidated (including options). To be substantial, such cost savings must be at least 10 percent of the contract value (including options).

(iv) In assessing whether cost savings and/or a price reduction would be achieved through bundling, the pro-

curing activity and SBA must compare the price that has been charged by small businesses for the work that they have performed and, where available, the price that could have been or could be charged by small businesses for the work not previously performed by small business.

(6) *OMB Circular A-76 Cost Comparison Analysis.* The substantial benefit analysis set forth in paragraph (d)(5)(i) of this section is not required where a requirement is subject to a Cost Comparison Analysis under OMB Circular A-76 (See 5 CFR 1310.3 for availability).

(7) *Substantial bundling.* Where a proposed procurement strategy involves a substantial bundling of contract requirements, the procuring agency must, in the documentation of that strategy, include a determination that the anticipated benefits of the proposed bundled contract justify its use, and must include, at a minimum:

(i) The analysis for bundled requirements set forth in paragraph (d)(5)(i) of this section;

(ii) An assessment of the specific impediments to participation by small business concerns as prime contractors that will result from the substantial bundling;

(iii) Actions designed to maximize small business participation as prime contractors, including provisions that encourage small business teaming for the substantially bundled requirement; and

(iv) Actions designed to maximize small business participation as subcontractors (including suppliers) at any tier under the contract or contracts that may be awarded to meet the requirements.

(8) *Significant subcontracting opportunity.* (i) Where a bundled or substantially bundled requirement offers a significant opportunity for subcontracting, the procuring agency must designate the following factors as significant factors in evaluating offers:

(A) A factor that is based on the rate of participation provided under the subcontracting plan for small business in the performance of the contract; and

(B) For the evaluation of past performance of an offeror, a factor that is based on the extent to which the offeror attained applicable goals for small

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business participation in the performance of contracts.

(ii) Where the offeror for such a bundled contract qualifies as a small business concern, the procuring agency must give to the offeror the highest score possible for the evaluation factors identified in paragraph (d)(5)(i) of this section.

[61 FR 3312, Jan. 31, 1996, as amended at 63 FR 31908, June 11, 1998; 64 FR 57370, Oct. 25, 1999; 65 FR 45833, July 26, 2000]

§ 125.3 Subcontracting assistance.

(a) The purpose of the subcontracting assistance program is to achieve maximum utilization of small business by major prime contractors. The Act requires other-than-small firms awarded contracts that offer subcontracting possibilities by the Federal Government in excess of \$500,000, or \$1 million for construction of a public facility, to submit a subcontracting plan to the contracting agency. The FAR sets forth the requirements for subcontracting plans in 48 CFR part 19, subpart 19.7, and 48 CFR 52.219-9.

(b) Upon determination of the successful subcontract offeror on a subcontract for which a small business, small disadvantaged business, and/or a HUBZone small business received a preference, but prior to award, the prime contractor must inform each unsuccessful offeror in writing of the name and location of the apparent successful offeror and if the successful offeror was a small business, small disadvantaged business, or HUBZone business. This applies to all subcontracts over \$10,000.

(c) SBA Commercial Market Representatives (CMRs) facilitate the process of matching large prime contractors with small, small disadvantaged, and HUBZone subcontractors. CMRs identify, develop, and market small businesses to the prime contractors and assist the small concerns in obtaining subcontracts.

(d) Each CMR has a portfolio of prime contractors and conducts periodic compliance reviews and needs assessments of the companies in this portfolio. CMRs are also required to perform opportunity development and source identification. Opportunity development means assessing the current

and future needs of the prime contractors. Source identification means identifying those small, small disadvantaged, and HUBZone concerns which can fulfill the needs assessed from the opportunity development process.

[61 FR 3312, Jan. 31, 1996; 61 FR 7986, Mar. 1, 1996, as amended at 63 FR 31908, June 11, 1998]

§ 125.4 Government property sales assistance.

(a) The purpose of SBA's Government property sales assistance program is to:

(1) Insure that small businesses obtain their fair share of all Federal real and personal property qualifying for sale or other competitive disposal action; and

(2) Assist small businesses in obtaining Federal property being processed for disposal, sale, or lease.

(b) SBA property sales assistance primarily consists of two activities:

(1) Obtaining small business set-asides when necessary to insure that a fair share of Government property sales are made to small businesses; and

(2) Providing advice and assistance to small businesses on all matters pertaining to sale or lease of Government property.

(c) The program is intended to cover the following categories of Government property:

(1) Sales of timber and related forest products;

(2) Sales of strategic material from national stockpiles;

(3) Sales of royalty oil by the Department of Interior's Minerals Management Service;

(4) Leases involving rights to minerals, petroleum, coal, and vegetation; and

(5) Sales of surplus real and personal property.

(d) SBA has established specific small business size standards and rules for the sale or lease of the different kinds of Government property. These provisions are contained in §§121.501 through 121.514 of this chapter.

§ 125.5 Certificate of Competency Program.

(a) *General.* (1) The Certificate of Competency (COC) Program is authorized under section 8(b)(7) of the Small